SPORTS

Winchester girls soccer earns recognition after a season filled with awarding all-star performances

JOE MCCONNELL | SPORTS EDITOR

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Winchester High girls soccer senior captain Lilly Ossen (11) gets the ball under control during a regular season game against Belmont. Teammates GG Fantini (8), a junior, and Grace Bonnet (14), a sophomore, provides support as they head up field together. Ossen has since received many accolades, including the United Soccer Coaches Team MVP award. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

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There was plenty to celebrate this fall for Coach Michelle Ross' Winchester High girls soccer team.

The varsity roster was made up of many young players that included eight freshmen, but they still managed to compile an 14-2-2 regular season record to secure another Middlesex League championship for the fourth straight year.

It all added up to being the seventh seed in Division 1, and going 1-1 in the postseason, where they defeated Beverly in Double OT, 3-2 in the Round of 32, before dropping a 1-0 decision to Concord-Carlisle in the Sweet 16.

With so much success, the awards season was extra special. It included the annual team banquet at the Winchester Country Club two days before Thanksgiving on Nov. 25. Previously, the EMass all-star team was announced at Woburn High School.

Winchester High girls soccer freshman defender Charlotte Bjercke (20) is among the many you this year's varsity roster, who are ready to follow in the leadership footsteps of the current sen the team's success as one of the best squads in Division 1. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

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Now, let's get onto the awards. For the second straight year, the Red & Black won the United Soccer Coaches Team Pinnacle Award after winning its Team Ethics Award in 2024. They were chosen for the same award this year after earning the coveted prize with just one yellow card in 20 games. It will be officially announced next year.

The Winchester girls also received the United Soccer Coaches Team Academics Award for the 2024-25 school year.

Lilly Ossen earned the United Soccer Coaches Team MVP award after setting the new standard for effort, attitude and sportsmanship both on and off the pitch. This award is given to a player for extraordinary performances, dedication to training and ability to elevate teammates. In other words, it's all about the true spirit of team.

Ossen also received the United Soccer Coaches Senior Excellence Award.

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Onto the specific team awards and achievements, Sophie Shapiro won the Middlesex League MVP award. Emma Kiernan, Juliet Semmes, Gaby Hermsdorf, Amanda Mitchell, Ossen and Shapiro were singled out as league all-stars at last week's banquet.

Shapiro, also an All-State selection, and Ossen were then officially announced as members of the All-League team.

Shapiro, Kiernan, Ossen, Semmes and Hermsdorf were chosen EMass all-stars, as well. The EMass Girls Soccer Coaches Association made it complete, when it selected Ross as its Division 1 Coach of the Year. Ross was then able to coach those players once more in the EMass all-
on Nov. 23, two days before the team banquet.

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Winchester High girls soccer senior captain Gaby Hermsdorf (2) surveys the field as she looks to make a play on Senior Night. Her extraordinary efforts this year resulted in being named to both the Middlesex League and EMass all-star squads. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

The Winchester High School Ted Preston Unicorn Award went to Grace Wilhoite. This award honors a player who best embodies Preston's love of the game, passion for life, respect for competition and unparalleled kindness, not to mention being an ideal teammate with a positive attitude, who's also selfless.

Beyond the individual awards, Ross credits the entire team for this memorable successful season.

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"They were incredibly resilient, which made them mentally, physically and emotionally determined to come out on top," she said. "No matter what the season threw at them, they kept showing up and working hard to become better players, while constantly demonstrating sportsmanship, ethics, academic excellence and accountability throughout the season to ensure the continuation of the program's values."

Joe McConnell is a longtime, award-winning sports editor for numerous North Shore publications. He began covering Winchester sports for the News last November.

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Sweet 16 game after beating Lexington in postseason opener

It was the third meeting this year between Middlesex League boys basketball rivals Lexington (16-5, 11th seed) and Winchester (17-4, 22nd seed). They split the first two during the regular season, thus making this Round of 32 postseason matchup the impromptu rubber game of this year's series, with the

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senior captains move on to All-States

After the Winchester High qualified wrestlers competed hard over two days last weekend (Feb. 20, 21) in the State Division 1 Meet at North Andover High School, Mother Nature gave them a break to rest and recuperate with Monday's blizzard that resulted in two days off from school. There

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Winchester boys hockey advances to the Sweet 16 after beating Wachusett in the tournament opener

The Winchester High boys hockey team (12-9-2), the 17th seed, edged the 16th-seeded Wachusett Regional Mountaineers (18-2-1), 5-4 in a Round of 32 Division 1 state tournament game at Westborough's Northstar Ice Arena on Feb. 25. The Red & Black will now take on top seed Catholic Memorial (18-2-1)

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With postseason starting Friday night, WHS boys hoop seniors English, Sarpong, Burbine join Middlesex League elite

The Winchester High boys basketball team, the 22nd seed, will take on Middlesex League rival Lexington, the 11th seed, to begin the Division 1 state tournament in the Round of 32 on Friday night, Feb. 27, starting at 6 p.m. These teams are so evenly matched, beginning with the

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‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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